

REMARKS

In the Office Action, claims 1-8, 10 and 12-19 were rejected under 35 USC §103(a) as being unpatentable over Erich Holzhüter (GB 2 058 218) in view of Dufour.

The claims have been amended to now refer to the terms "inlet pipe" and "outlet pipe" so as to move away from the configuration that is shown in GB2058218 where the bleed flow is between the volute casing of the pump. In the present invention, the bleed flow is delivered into the inlet pipe upstream from the volute casing. The present invention is aimed at being retrofittable to existing pumping systems and as such it is more convenient to direct the bleed flow into the pipe upstream from the pump rather than modifying the volute casing.

The pumping arrangement of the present invention is for the pumping of a pre-established multi-phase flow derived from a pre-existing multi-phase fluid source. In the Dufour patent, gas is injected into what appears to be a pure liquid in-flow immediately prior to or in fact into the pump itself. It is not a pump system designed for the displacement of a multi-phase fluid from one location to another.

The present invention does not establish the multi-phase fluid. Instead it displaces from a pre-existing source, the multi-phase fluid.

Because of this difference as well as the distinguishing now of the location at which the bleed flow is delivered into the inlet side of the pump (i.e. into the inlet pipe and not the volute casing as is the case in GB '218), the present invention is distinguished over the pair art so that neither of the two most relevant prior publications individually or in combination render the present invention obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the claims in the present application, as they now stand, patentably distinguish over the references cited and applied by the Examiner and are, therefore, in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is in order, and such favorable action and reconsideration are respectfully requested.

However, if after reviewing the above amendments and remarks, the Examiner has any questions or comments, he is cordially invited to contact the undersigned attorneys.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: July 12, 2004
JLS/dmt